

## Tricks, Treats, and Strange Things by JoMo3

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**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers & Eleven | Jane & Dustin Henderson & Maxine Mayfield & Lucas Sinclair & Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

Eleven's first Halloween is here, and the boys (namely Mike) want it to be the best. Mainly Halloween/Mileven fluff.

## 1. Yes or No?

It was mid October, and all throughout Hawkins, IN ghoulish decorations were making their presence felt, signaling the return of a certain holiday-Halloween. Parents were buying candy by the bag-full, kids were deciding on which costumes to wear. Older kids were making last minute party plans, while some high schoolers had a choice to make.

A week before Halloween, the original party members-Mike, Lucas, Will, and Dustin-sat around the game table in the Wheeler basement, trying to make an important decision:

Were they too old to trick or treat?

“We’re too old,” Lucas said. “I mean, we’re in *high* school now.”

“That doesn’t mean anything,” Dustin argued. “High schoolers trick or treat all the time.”

“Yeah, the lame ones,” Lucas said.

“Come on,” Mike said. “Halloween’s the greatest night of the year. Besides, we’ve still got another year or two before it starts to look, like, pathetic.”

Lucas turned to his right. “You agree with me, don’t you?” he asked Will.

But Will shook his head, saying “I think we should go.”

Dustin and Mike cheered, while Lucas groaned. “You, too?” he asked.

“I mean, yeah,” Will said. “Last Halloween was, you know...bad for me. This year could be like a do over.”

The boys grew quiet, not wanting to relive last Halloween’s terror for Will.

"That's three to one," Mike said. "Majority rules."

"No," Lucas said, "You haven't asked Max."

"Or El," Dustin said.

Mike sighed, and sat back in his chair. "Fine. But I know El wants to go. Does Max?"

Lucas put his head down. "Yes."

"So what're you making a big stink for?" Mike asked.

"I don't know. I was hoping one of you would be on my side."

"You don't have to go," Will offered.

"No way," Mike said. "We stick together."

"Besides, it'd suck without you," added Dustin.

Lucas huffed. "Fine. I'll go."

Lucas's reluctance to go trick or treating ate at Mike after his friends went home; *Halloween is the best day of the year*, he thought. *How could he not want to go?*

Unlike his friend, Mike couldn't be happier to be trick or treating. Since pumpkin and ghost decorations began showing up in Hawkins a few weeks ago, Eleven had been excited about the upcoming holiday; peppering Mike with questions about trick or treating and costumes. She'd told him how last year she'd tried to go as a ghost, but Hopper wouldn't let her.

"And I was a Ghostbuster!" he'd said, clapping a hand to his forehead. "That would've been so cool!"

She'd giggled at his reaction, and went on with her questioning.

Now he got to take her trick or treating for the first time; he was looking forward to sharing his favorite holiday with her.

He started to call her on the Supercom, but thought it would be better to tell her in person. In the meantime, he began brainstorming costume ideas for the big day.

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Eleven, meanwhile, was sitting at the cabin, eyes alternating between her Supercom and the television. She and Hopper were sitting on the couch, engrossed in an episode of *Magnum PI*. Hopper had slowly become a fan of the show, and had even begun growing his moustache similar to the show's star.

"You gonna call him?" Hopper asked as a commercial came on.

"Call who?"

Hopper gave her a look of disbelief.

"No," she answered, with one last look at the walkie. "He said he might be busy."

A commercial came on, an ad for the Starcourt Mall and their "Halloween Spectacular!" Hopper saw the way El's eyes lit up, so he asked, "You know what costume you want, yet?"

"Not yet," she responded, shaking her head.

To be honest, Eleven was just thrilled that she got to go. After being disappointed last year, she'd been looking forward to this year's Halloween for a few months now. In fact, the only good thing that came from last year's holiday was the triple decker Eggo extravaganza. Speaking of which...

"Did you buy the candy yet?" she asked.

"No," he responded. "I'll get it sometime this weekend. You don't need it yet, anyway."

Eleven was planning on making the Eggo extravaganza for Mike soon, and had been requesting the necessary ingredients. "Mike's mom already has candy."

Hopper raised an eyebrow, and sighed. “Well, good for Mike’s mom. But you’re going to get *yours* this weekend. Got it?”

“But I wanted to have it tomorrow.”

Hopper groaned, and shuffled his body on the couch. “Fine. Look, how about this. You’re going over to see him tomorrow, right? After school?”

“Three one five,” she said.

“Yeah. That. I’ll leave a couple of bucks behind and you can get some when you bike over there. Okay?”

She nodded, satisfied.

“Just don’t go into Big Buy,” he said.

“Why?”

“El, you *stole* from them. I don’t want you going in there by yourself.”

She frowned; she knew Bradley’s would have exactly what she was looking for.

“Go to Melvald’s, Joyce will hook you up.”

“Okay,” she mumbled as the show returned from commercial.

\*

At school the next day, Mike caught up with Lucas at his locker. Still curious about his friend’s hesitancy on trick or treating, he decided to cut to the chase. “Why don’t you want to go?” he asked.

“Go where?”

“Trick or treating. We’ve always done it.”

Lucas closed his locker and turned towards his friend. “We also always played with action figures.”

Mike looked confused. “I still play with action figures,” he said.

Lucas rolled his eyes, and proceeded to move on to his first class of the day. Mike followed him. "So, what, you're too cool for it now, or something?"

"I never said that," Lucas said. "I just think we're too old, that's all."

"Since when?"

"Why won't you just let this go? I told you I'd go with you guys. *Gosh*."

"Fine," Mike said, stopping. He watched Lucas stalk off, wondering what was going on.

\*

After eating lunch, Eleven biked her way into town. She still had a few hours before the boys got home from school, but she wanted to get the candy purchasing out of the way.

She biked past Big Buy, and was tempted to go in, but remembered her talk with Hopper.

Eventually she arrived downtown, and parked her ride in front of Melvald's General Store. From what she could see in the window, they didn't sell as much Halloween gear as Big Buy.

"Hi, El," Joyce said as she walked in. The woman sat behind the counter, a magazine on her lap and a smile on her face. "What brings you in here, sweetie?"

"I'm looking for candy," Eleven explained as she walked to the counter. El paused, remembering what she needed, then recited "Candy corn and M & M's."

"We have that," Joyce said, standing from her chair. El followed her down an aisle and, sure enough, saw bagged candy in an almost-hidden Halloween section of the store.

"Thank you," El said, stooping down and picking up the required candy. She followed Joyce back to the front, and used Hopper's money to pay (with Joyce providing a discount) for the candy.

Despite finding her candy, she still wore a frown on her face.

“What is it?” Joyce asked, noticing.

“I wanted to look at costumes,” El admitted.

Now Joyce frowned. “Sorry, we don’t really have any here. You’d probably find some at the mall. Or maybe Big Buy, I think they have some.”

Eleven shook her head. “Hopper said I can’t go there by myself.”

“Oh. Well,” Joyce glanced at the clock. “I have my break right now, I can take you, if you want.”

El nodded happily, and the two made their way out of the store.

\*

When school finally let out, Mike was eager to get home. El was coming over, and he was looking forward to telling her that the party was going to go out on Halloween. To be honest, Mike would’ve gone without the group; he was taking Eleven trick or treating whether they’d all agreed or not. It just felt better knowing that they’d all be going together.

Speaking of which...

He still didn’t know what was bothering Lucas. Granted, Mike and Dustin were the biggest advocates for Halloween, but Will and Lucas were fans, too. Mike wondered why his friend had become so against it all of a sudden.

At lunch he’d brought it up to Will and Dustin, but hadn’t gotten very far, with neither of them offering solutions. So he decided to shake it off, and just focus on the fun time he’d be having with El and the rest of the group.

After meeting up with the party, the bike ride home was full of talk about possible weekend activities, as well as the school day. Eventually the group began to separate; Will turned onto Mirkwood, Dustin’s house came up, and then it was just Mike and Lucas riding

side by side, talking about comic books.

Lucas's house came up first, and the two said goodbye. But before Mike rode away, he decided to try one more time to see what was bothering his friend.

"Why don't you want to go trick or treating?" he asked, getting straight to the point.

"Again with this?" Lucas asked. "I already said I was going to go, how much more do you want?"

"It's just you've always liked it, now you act like it's for babies." When Lucas didn't answer, Mike thought for a second, and asked "Is it Max?"

"What?"

"Is it because you have a girlfriend now, you think you're above it?"

"No," Lucas said. "Besides, you have a girlfriend, and you're not above it. And Max said she wants to go, remember?"

Mike nodded, remembering. "Then what is it?"

Lucas sighed, and folded his arms. "It's the stupid basketball team."

"What? What does that have to do with anything?" Mike knew Lucas had tried out for the school's team, but couldn't see the relation.

Lucas shuffled his feet. "Some of the guys were talking about going to a party on Halloween and..."

"And you'd rather hang out with them?"

"No," Lucas said. "I'd rather hang out with you guys. But I mentioned going trick or treating, and they..."

"They what?"

"They laughed at me."

Mike scrunched his face. "Is that it?"



“What do you mean?”

“Lucas, we’ve been getting laughed at for years. Why does it matter now?”

Lucas shrugged. “I don’t know. It just...embarrassed me. I thought high school would be different, you know?”

“But why do you care what they think?”

“I don’t know. But it bothered me.”

“They’re just a bunch of mouth breathers, Lucas.” When Lucas still hadn’t cheered up, Mike sighed and said “I mean...if you really don’t want to go, we can make up some excuse to everyone else. You don’t *have* to go.”

“But we’re supposed to stick together, remember?”

Mike nodded. “But if you guys had decided not to go, I was going to just take El, anyway. But if you don’t want to go, I...”

Lucas shook his head. “I’ll go.”

“You sure?”

“Yeah. They *are* mouth breathers. Besides, someone has to tell El how much better Snickers are than your precious Milky Ways,” he teased.

“Ugh,” Mike said, making a face. “All those peanuts.” He grinned at Lucas. “So you’re coming?”

Lucas nodded. “I’m coming.”

“Cool,” Mike said, hitting his friend’s shoulder. “We’ll talk tomorrow, see what costumes we can do.” He turned his bike towards the street.

“You wanna come in and play a video game?” Lucas asked.

Shaking his head, Mike said “El’s coming over soon. I’ll see you tomorrow!” He biked off, happy to have talked things out with Lucas.

A little less than an hour later Eleven arrived at the Wheeler home. After Mike greeted her with a hug, he noticed the backpack she had on.

“What’s in their?” he asked.

“Secret,” she replied, a smile on her lips.

Mike shrugged, and began to lead her into the basement, when she shook her head, saying “I’ll be down in a few minutes.”

Mike raised an eyebrow. “Is this part of your secret, too?”

She smiled mischievously, but didn’t answer his question. “Few minutes.”

“Okay,” he said, kissing her cheek before he went downstairs.

He took a seat on the couch, wondering why she was being all secretive. Maybe, he thought, she had a Halloween costume in her backpack and wanted to surprise him with it? The thought of El dressed as Princess Leia floated through his mind and he grinned.

*Or it could just be homework, moron,* he thought to himself. El wasn’t in school with them just yet, but the goal was for her to start next month.

He heard the basement door open, and he waited as El came downstairs, holding a plate with a lid over it. She placed it on the game table, and Mike moved from the couch to a chair, eyeing the mysterious covered plate.

Mike looked confused, while Eleven had a proud smile on her face. “What is it?” Mike asked.

“Open it,” she said.

He pulled off the lid, and smiled at what he saw: two stacks of Eggo waffles, covered in whipped cream and decorated with candy corn and M & M’s.

Looking up at her, he asked, “Is this..”

She nodded. "Triple Decker Eggo Extravaganza."

"Wow," Mike said, taking it all in. He'd heard the legend of these waffles, but had never gotten to have any before. He ran a finger over the whipped cream, and licked it off his fingers. "Yum."

The two sat down and attacked the food, catching up with what'd happened since they last saw each other, and giggling about the mess they made. When the plate was clear, and they'd picked off the stray bits of candy, the two crashed on the couch, the sugar rush dying down. That was when Mike decided to tell her.

"The guys all decided to go," he told her.

"What?"

"Trick or treating. Everyone's going to go." She smiled, and let out a happy sigh as she lay her head on his shoulder. "Now all we have to do is come up with costumes."

El grinned, thinking about the costumes she'd seen at Big Buy earlier with Joyce. She had a few ideas in mind, but decided not to tell Mike just yet. Sometimes surprises were worth it.

## 2. Candy and Costumes

The next day that everyone in the party got to meet each other was on Sunday; even Eleven made the trip from the cabin.

The group all arrived at different times, but of course congregated in Mike's basement. Mike and El sat together on one side of the couch, while Lucas and Max took up the other end. Their single friends, Will and Dustin, sat at the game table.

Now that Lucas had officially come around, he was all into trick or treating, teasing the other boys about what candy they'd get. El had asked a question that got the group started:

"Which candy is the best?"

Everyone's (except Mike's) jaw had dropped at the simple question.

"Seriously?" Lucas asked. "Snickers, of course."

"You're still on that?" Max asked, rolling her eyes. "Tootsie Rolls, El."

The rest of the group made a face, causing Max to frown. "What?"

"You did *not* just say Tootsie Rolls were the best candy," Mike said.

"Why, what's wrong with Tootsie Rolls?"

"Um, they're *nasty*," Dustin said.

"Says the guy that thinks Three Musketeers is the best."

"I never said they were the best, I said they were top three," Dustin corrected. "And besides, we may not be here if I hadn't had a Three Musketeers bar in my pocket in those tunnels."

"We may not have even *been* in those tunnels if you hadn't kept Dart a secret," Lucas said.

The room got uncomfortably quiet for a moment, until Will piped in.

“Well, I like Reese’s Pieces,” he offered.

Eleven nodded, smiling. “I like those, too. And M & M’s.” She looked to Mike. “Which one do you like?”

“Milky Way,” he answered.

Eleven looked confused. “I don’t think I’ve had that one.”

Mike looked as if she’d just said the Demogorgon had walked in the door. “You’ve never had a Milky Way??”

Eleven blushed, slightly. “No,” she said, shaking her head.

“Calm down, Wheeler, jeez,” Max said. “It’s not the end of the world.”

“Okay,” Mike said, settling down. “Tell you what. On Halloween, we will *definitely* get you some Milky Ways.”

El smiled, and cozied up on Mike’s shoulder.

When the talk moved to costumes, Eleven kept quiet about her idea, deciding she’d rather tell Mike when they were alone. Still, she was surprised to find out the boys weren’t wearing similar costumes this year.

“We can’t decide,” Will explained. “Mike wants to do Star Wars...”

“He *always* wants to do Star Wars,” Dustin muttered.

“I want to do the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,” Will said with a grin.

“And I wanted to do The Goonies,” Lucas said.

Eleven scrunched her nose, confused. “What’s a Goonie?”

“It’s a movie,” Mike explained.

“So...what are you going to dress as?”

There was a pause, until Max said “Well *I’m* going as Jason Voorhies.

I already got my hockey mask and jacket.”

Mike shrugged. “The rest of us aren’t sure yet.”

“We could go as the Ghostbusters again,” Dustin said with a smile. “El could be our ghost.”

“Ghostbusters was last year,” Lucas said. “We’d look like idiots wearing it two years in a row.”

“Didn’t you guys already look like idiots last year?” Max asked with a smirk.

“Besides, I’m not going to have Winston forced on me again,” Lucas said with a glance at Mike.

“You agreed you would be him,” Mike said.

“No I *didn’t*,” Lucas declared.

“I don’t think he did,” Will said.

“Whatever we wear,” Dustin said, stopping the mini-fight, “We’re not going to wear it to school.” He shook his head at the memory from last year.

The boys continued to toss around ideas and suggestions, arguing every so often. Eleven just listened in, somewhat happy that Mike didn’t have his costume picked out yet.

When the rest of the group left, Mike and Eleven settled back on the couch. They still had some time before Hopper came to get her, so they sat on opposite ends, feet meeting in the middle while Mike played with his Rubik’s cube. El, meanwhile, was thumbing through a book she’d brought when she decided to broach the subject on her mind.

“Mike?”

He glanced up. “Yeah?”

“Um...I have an idea for a costume.”

“Yeah?” he grinned, and set down the cube. “Why didn’t you say anything earlier?”

“I just wanted to tell *you* ,” she said.

“Okay. What is it?”

Pulling her feet in, she answered, saying “I was thinking...I could be Minnie Mouse?”

Mike nodded, imagining El looking cute in a Minnie Mouse outfit. “Okay.”

“And maybe you could be Mickey Mouse?”

“Oh.” He frowned, slightly, and she caught it.

Dipping her head, she asked “You don’t want to?”

“No, it’s not that, I just...I didn’t know you wanted to do, like, a couple’s costume.”

“Oh.” She fidgeted with her fingers. “But you would wear it with me?”

“Uh...” He had been hoping they could go as Han Solo and Princess Leia; plus he could already hear his friends making fun of him.

“It’s okay,” she said, looking down again.

“No, El,” he said, reaching across and taking her hand. “It’s not...it’s not my first choice. Or really even my *second* choice, to be honest, but...this is your first Halloween. And....if you want, then I’ll do it,” he said with a shrug.

“Really?”

He nodded. “Really.”

She smiled, and moved closer so her arms could wrap behind his head. She pulled him in for a kiss. “Thank you, Mike,” she said after

they pulled away.

He grinned. "You're welcome, El."

Hopper arrived soon after, and after saying goodbye to Mike, Eleven went out and climbed into Hopper's cruiser. On the way home, she smiled and said "I know what I want to be for Halloween."

"You do?" Hopper asked. "Took you long enough. Okay. What do you want to go as?"

"Minnie Mouse," she said.

Hopper nodded. "Okay. I think that can work."

"And Mike is going to be Mickey," she added.

Hopper barked a laugh that El hadn't been expecting, causing her to frown. "What's funny?"

Hopper, still smiling, shook his head as he answered. "It's nothing. I think Mike would look funny dressed as Mickey, that's all."

Eleven shook her head. "Mike will look cute."

"If you say so, kid."

Still, Eleven spent that night thinking about both Mike and Hopper's initial reactions to her idea. Was it the wrong costume?

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Mike definitely did *not* want to go trick or treating as Mickey Mouse. He had been hoping that she was just joking with him, but El wasn't the kind to kid like that. But he would do anything for her, even if it meant dressing like a giant mouse and getting made fun of by his friends.

She'd told him that she had gone to Big Buy yesterday, and had seen Mickey and Minnie Mouse costumes, which had spurred her idea.



*Why couldn't she have seen Han and Leia??* he thought to himself.

He was still thinking about it Monday after school, when the boys went costume shopping at Starcourt Mall. There was a store dedicated to just Halloween, and it was chock-full of people, buying last minute wears for the upcoming holiday.

"There's barely anything here," Will pointed out as they walked into the store.

"That's what we get for waiting until the last minute," Lucas said. "Come on, let's see what's left." Lucas and Will had already decided on their costumes; Lucas was going to go as Michael Jackson, while Will was going as Marty McFly. Dustin was still undecided, and Mike still hadn't told them about El's planned costumes.

They made their way to the first aisle. After no one saw anything appealing, they moved to the next.

"They have Darth Vader," Lucas said, pointing to a Star Wars costume. "There's no helmet, though."

"No, it's too small," Dustin said.

The boys slowly made their way down the aisle, touching, turning, and considering possible costume choices when they saw them.

"So, Mike," Lucas began, "Has El said what she wants to be?"

"Yeah," Mike said, grimacing. "Minnie Mouse."

"That's kind of neat," Will said.

"And she wants me to be Mickey," Mike said under his breath.

"Are you serious?" Dustin asked with a grin.

"Yes," Mike muttered.

"Are you doing it?" Lucas asked.

Mike shrugged. "I guess so. I was hoping to be Han and Leia, you

know?”

“Why didn’t you tell her?” asked Will.

“I don’t know.”

“Yeah you do,” Lucas said.

“What’s that mean?”

“It means you’d do anything for El. Even if it means dressing like a big, goofy, mouse.”

Mike blushed slightly, but he knew they were right. If El had wanted to go as something as ridiculous as Raggedy Ann and Andy, he’d have done that, too.

“It’s her first Halloween,” Mike explained. “If that’s what she wants, then I can give up one year. There’s always next year. Maybe.”

“Guys? Where’s Dustin?” Will asked. The other boys looked around and noticed, too, that their curly haired friend had disappeared.

“Dustin?” Lucas called. The trio made their way to the next aisle, then the next before they found him, a huge smile on his face.

“What?” Mike asked. Dustin held something in his hands, but the group didn’t have a clear view of it.

“This is it, guys,” Dustin said, holding up the costume. “Indiana Jones,” he said proudly.

“Cool,” Will said, looking it over. “It’s even got a whip and everything.”

“*Da da da daaa, da da daaaa,*” Dustin said, singing the Indiana Jones theme song as he made his way towards the register, his friends right behind him.

\*

That same day, El made a trip into town, stopping by Max’s home.

Over the past 24 hours her thoughts had been about her costume choice, and she wanted to get the redhead's opinion.

The two girls sat on Max's bed as El told her friend about the whole Mickey/Minnie decision.

Max snorted a laugh, which, just like with Hopper, got Eleven to frown. "What's funny?"

Shaking her head, Max answered "Oh, nothing. Just that I am *not* going to let Mike live this down."

"Live this down? What does that mean?"

"Nothing," Max said, chuckling. Seeing Eleven frowning, she said "I'm just gonna bust his chops, El. That's all."

"...bust his chops?"

Max rolled her eyes. "I'm going to make fun of him."

Eleven nodded, understanding; then frowned again. "Hopper laughed, too."

Max shrugged. "It's *funny* ."

Eleven huffed, laying against the headboard. "Do you think Mike hates it?"

Max shrugged again. "I dunno. But it's probably not what he wanted to do."

"He told me he would do it. Why would he say yes if he doesn't want to?"

"He probably doesn't want to hurt your feelings, El."

"But friends don't lie."

"Yeah, but sometimes it's easier to lie than to hurt someone's feelings, you know?"

The next day, Tuesday, Mike got to hang out with Eleven again when Hopper dropped her off at the Wheeler's after school. The two made a beeline to the basement, where they ended up at their usual spot, sitting on the couch.

Mike told her about school, while Eleven talked about her tutoring. Still, Mike could tell something was off. When Eleven finished discussing how she was assigned *Jane Eyre*, Mike decided to ask her what was going on.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing," she answered, but her fidgety hands gave her away.

"El, seriously...what's wrong? You can tell me."

"Do you... *want* to dress up with me?"

He hesitated, before he answered. "Yeah. Yeah, I do."

"Mike..."

He sighed. "Well, okay. Not really."

"Then why did you say yes?" she asked, looking hurt.

"Because it's your first Halloween, El. And I wanted it to be special for you. So if you want to go as Mickey and Minnie, then we can go as Mickey and Minnie. It's just one year, El. There's always next time."

She pouted. "But I don't want you to be unhappy."

"I won't be."

She gave him a look.

"Maybe a little, but it's okay, I'll get over it. Besides, I can't be *too* unhappy, 'cuz I'll be with you."

She blushed, and ducked her head a little. "Hopper and Max laughed when I told them," she admitted.

“Oh, gosh, Max knows? I’m never going to hear the end of it.”

“We can go as something else....”

Mike shook his head. “I can survive them making fun of me. What I can’t survive is you being upset because I was too much of a chicken. I love you too much.”

That got her blushing even more. “I love you, too, Mike.”

He grinned goofily at her, and they moved closer, pecking lips in a chaste kiss before they cuddled together on the couch.

“Thank you,” she said into his shoulder.

“You’re welcome, El.”

They spent the rest of their time together chatting about which candy they hoped to get, as well as which neighborhoods they’d hit up. Eleven, meanwhile, couldn’t keep the smile off her face as she looked forward to her very first real Halloween.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Mickey and Minnie or Han Solo and Leia?

### 3. The Freaks Come Out at Night

The next day after school, Mike and Eleven made the trip to Bradley's Big Buy in search of their costumes. Hopper still wasn't too keen on El going there without him, but figured it may be okay if Mike was with her. Still, Eleven kept her head down out of fear of being recognized.

Upon entering, the two headed towards the back of the store, where the Halloween section was. The store had two aisles of costumes, candy, and all kinds of spooky accessories. Mike tried not to let out a sigh of longing when he saw a Han Solo costume. Instead, he turned to Eleven and asked "So where'd you see the costumes?"

"Down here," she said, taking his hand and leading him one aisle over. This second aisle was a little more messier than the last, with clothes strewn all over the floors. Still, Eleven had no problem finding Mickey and Minnie, hanging in the back of the aisle as if they'd been waiting for them.

Mike nodded, looking them over as he pulled them off the rack. It wasn't *too* bad, he thought. His costume consisted of big floppy shoes, red pants, a black vest with dress shirt, and a set of ears. There was *no way* he was going to wear the ears, he thought to himself.

El's Minnie costume came with white leggings, a polka-dotted skirt, a black top, and her own set of ears. He couldn't help but smile when he saw the happy look on Eleven's face as she held it in front of her.

"Ready?" he asked her.

She nodded, smiling.

The two went up front and paid for their purchases, then hopped on their bikes to head home.

"Do you want to try them on?" Mike asked.

El surprised him by shaking her head. "I want it to be a surprise," she said.

Mike chuckled. "We already know what we're going as, El; it's not much of a surprise."

"Please?" she asked, giving him a pout.

He rolled his eyes, knowing he was a goner. "Fine."

They ended up back at Mike's house, where they were soon joined by Will, Dustin, and Lucas to talk about the hot spots for trick or treating.

"Loch Nora, obviously," Dustin said.

"Definitely," Mike agreed, nodding his head.

"They always give out full size candy bars," Will explained to El.

"Don't forget the Richmonds," Lucas brought up.

"Oh, yeah, I almost forgot about them," Dustin said, smiling. "Their house is always so scary. Remember two years ago when they were jumping out of the bushes, scaring people?"

Eleven frowned; that didn't sound like fun to her.

"But they give great candy," Lucas said, seeing her face. "Plenty of Snickers bars."

"*Milky Ways*," Mike said, giving his friend a look. Lucas shrugged.

They heard the door leading upstairs open, and a moment later Max was coming downstairs. "You had a meeting and you didn't think to let me know?" she asked when she reached the bottom step.

"It was a last minute thing," Mike said.

Max shook her head, as she pulled out a chair to sit next to El. "Whatever, Mikey Mouse."

Mike turned a light shade of scarlet, while his friends barely contained their snickers.

"It's Mickey Mouse," El corrected.

"I know," Max said. "What're we talking about?"

"Which neighborhoods to get the best candy," Dustin explained.

"Oh. There's that house at the end of Cherry, they've got their house decorated like something out of a scary movie. They'll probably have good candy," Max suggested.

Eleven listened quietly to her friends, amazed at how serious they seemed to take trick or treating; she thought it was just something you do for fun. When the candy talks eventually died down, El took Max upstairs to show off her Minnie costume.

Once the girls had gone up, Lucas turned to Mike. With a smirk, he asked, "Still doing the couples costumes?"

"Yeah," Mike said.

"How does the costume look?"

"Like Mickey Mouse," Mike said, shrugging. "It's even got big feet and the ears."

Dustin chuckled. "Oh, Mikey, you're going to earn so many new nicknames tomorrow. How about this one: Mikey the Mouse?"

"Whatever," Mike said, rolling his eyes. "I can take it."

Dustin frowned. "See, now you're ruining *my* fun."

"How does El's look?" Will asked, changing the subject.

Mike blushed a little. "It looks...cute. And she's really looking forward to it, so...I guess I've come around."

Nearly twenty-four hours later, Eleven was in her room, standing in front of the mirror above her dresser as she carefully fit the mouse ears onto her head. The rest of her costume-the dress, the shoes, the leggings-were already on, and she smiled at her reflection in the mirror. She loved it.



Hopper was outside the door, waiting to drop her off at Mike's so he could go into work while she trick or treated.

"El," she heard him call, followed by a light tapping on her door. "Come on, let's go."

With one more smile at her reflection, Eleven went into the next room.

"Wow, look at you," Hopper said, beaming as he caught a glance at her. "You look as cute as a button."

She blushed. "Thank you."

"You all set?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, grabbing her jacket and walking towards the door.

"Whoa, whoa," Hopper said, stopping her. "Where's your bucket?"

"Bucket?"

"Yeah, the bucket for your candy. You didn't get one when you got your costumes?"

"No..." she said, frowning.

"Hm. Well," he walked into the bathroom, and grabbed a pillowcase. "I guess you're gonna have to kick it old school." He tossed it to her, and she gave it a curious look.

"Candy goes in here?"

"I'll explain in the car. Let's go."

A short explanation later, and the two were almost at their destination. As they pulled onto Maple Street, Hopper said "Look, kid, I'll be back here at 8 to pick you up. Don't eat too much candy, okay? You'll give yourself a stomach ache."

Eleven frowned. "How much is too much?"

"I don't know, El; just don't eat all of it, okay?"

"Okay. And you said 10."

"What?"

"10. You told me you'd pick me up at 10, not 8." The group was going to trick or treat until 8, then go back to Mike's to watch scary movies.

But Hopper shook his head. "I get off at 7:30, I should be able to pick you up after."

"But I want to have fun with my friends. Can you come later?"

They arrived at the end of the cul-de-sac, and the Wheeler's driveway. Putting the car in park, Hopper sighed. "Fine. Ten. But if you're not out here by ten o'clock, and *exactly* ten o'clock, you're grounded. Understand?"

She nodded happily. "Thanks, Hop!" Giving him a kiss on the cheek, she grabbed the pillowcase and jumped out of the car, eager to get to her friends.

Hopper breathed a laugh as he backed out of the driveway. Apparently Mike isn't the *only* one wrapped around her finger, he thought.

El knocked at the Wheeler's front door, excited to show Mike her costume. The door opened, and it was Nancy Wheeler who greeted her.

Nancy gave El a once over before nodding her approval, saying "Cool costume."

"Thanks," Eleven said, coming inside. "Is everyone else ready?"

"Everyone else isn't here yet," Nancy said, closing the door. "Mike should be down in a minute."

The two girls sat on the couch and caught up; El talked about her excitement for the night, while Nancy told how she had gotten Jonathan to agree to a party tonight.

Eleven's head turned as she heard footsteps coming down the steps, and she sat up as Mike arrived, looking dashing as Mickey Mouse.

"Wow, El," Mike said, looking her over. "You look...great."

She ducked her head shyly, before she said "You do, too."

"Yeah, not too shabby, Mike," Nancy said, getting up. She ruffled her brother's hair before leaving the room. That's when Eleven noticed something.

"You're not wearing the ears," she pointed out.

"Yeah. Uh...I didn't really want to wear them; they looked goofy on me." He looked up at her. "Is that okay?"

She frowned, slightly, but he didn't seem to notice. "I guess so," she said, sadly.

The doorbell rang. "Be right back," Mike said before giving El a kiss on the cheek and rushing to the door.

Eleven pouted. She really wanted she and Mike to match tonight. Yes, the ears didn't *make* the costume, but she thought he'd be wearing everything, like her.

A moment later the rest of the group rushed in dressed in their costumes; Will dressed as Marty McFly, holding one of Max's old skateboards as his hoverboard, Dustin looking dapper as Indiana Jones, Max in a hockey mask dressed as Jason Voorhies, and Lucas came in dressed in a red jacket with white gloves, a la Michael Jackson.

"Wow, El, cool costume," Max said, pulling back the hockey mask as she made her way over to her friend.

"Ellie and Mikey Mouse," Dustin said.

“Oh, gosh, already?” Mike asked.

“The night’s just beginning, Mickey,” Max said, giving him a mischievous grin.

Mike rolled his eyes.

After last minute checks in the mirror and a little more making fun of Mike, the group grabbed their things and headed out into the night.

They began their journey on Maple Street, with stops by both Lucas’s house (where Erica called him a nerd again) and Dustin’s (where Mrs. Henderson made them pose for too many pictures). As they made their way down the street, the group was in good spirits.

Except one person.

Mike wasn’t picking up on it, but both Will and Lucas could tell something was a little off with Eleven. As they began heading towards the end of the cul de sac, Lucas tugged on Mike’s arm.

“What’s wrong with El?” he asked Mike.

“What do you mean?”

“Doesn’t she seem, like, quieter than usual?”

Mike bit his lip, as he thought about what Lucas said. El was a quiet person to begin with, but she *had* been quieter since they’d left the house. As a matter of fact, he’d only really seen her smile when Mrs. Henderson had taken their picture.

He caught up to her, where she walked next to Max. Taking her hand, he pulled her to the side as she gave him a confused look.

“Mike?”

“El, are you...are you having fun?” he asked.

“Yes, Mike,” she said. But she didn’t smile or *look* like she was having

fun.

“Are you mad at me or something?”

“No. I’m fine,” she said, giving him a small smile as she turned around, catching up to their friends. He thought about calling out *Friends don’t lie*, but decided to give her space for the time being.

Their next stop was the Richmond home, where they happily accepted full size candy bars; including Snickers, Milky Ways, and Three Musketeers.

Eleven gave her Three Musketeers to Dustin, as did everyone else.

“You don’t know what you’re missing,” he said, smiling in glee.

“Yeah we do,” Lucas said.

Mike suddenly felt someone grab his arm, and was surprised to see Max pulling him off to the side.

“What’s your problem?” he asked her.

“What’s *your* problem?” she asked. “Can’t you tell that El is mad at you?”

“What did I do?” he asked, putting his hands up.

“The ears, Mickey,” she said, tapping his head. “She’s mad that you aren’t wearing the ears.”

“But she said she was okay with it.”

“Well, she’s not. So fix this, because you’re ruining her Halloween.”

Mike sighed, mad that he hadn’t picked up on El’s unhappiness. “Hey, guys?” he called, causing the group to turn to look at him. “I just remembered, I left something at home.”

Max smiled, while the boys and El looked confused. “Okay,” Will said. “We’ll wait here, and...”

“No, you guys go, it won’t take me too long,” Mike said, already

turning towards his house. "I'll catch up."

"Mike!" El called, looking worried. "Is everything okay?"

"No," he answered, "But it will be. See you guys in a few minutes!" He sprinted back towards the end of the cul-de-sac.

Despite Mike's urgings, the party stayed put, and were greeted a few minutes later with their friend jogging up to them, his right hand holding a set of mouse ears on his head.

Dustin snickered upon seeing the new accessory, while Lucas rolled his eyes. Max copied Dustin and laughed behind her hand.

El, however, looked as if Mike had just brought her the moon.

"You went back for those?" Will asked.

"Yeah," he answered with a nod, causing the ears to nearly topple off his head. He took a moment to catch his breath, then looked to El, who was looking at him lovingly. "Just a minute," Mike told the group, before taking El's hand and leading her to the curb.

"You got the ears," she said, touching the ears atop his head.

"I'm sorry I didn't get them before," he said. "I didn't like them."

She shook her head. "No, I'm sorry. Friends don't lie, and I should've said something. But...even if you didn't want to wear them, I should have been okay with it."

Now Mike shook his head, saying "I'll wear them, El. I'll wear them for you. I don't want to ruin your first Halloween." He shrugged. "They're just ears."

She smiled, and leaned forward, placing a kiss on his lips. "You aren't ruining it," she said, shaking her head. "But you did just make it better."

He smiled, and kissed her nose. Extending his hand, he asked "Ready,

Minnie?”

El giggled. “Ready, Mickey.”

“Oh my gosh, are you two done yet?” Dustin asked from a few feet away. “We’re losing daylight.”

“It’s nighttime, idiot,” Lucas said.

“You know what I mean,” Dustin responded as Mike and El returned, hand in hand.

“Are Minnie and Mikey ready to go?” Max asked.

Eleven nodded, and the group began their way towards Loch Nora.

## 4. The Monster Mash

With Mike now donning the Mickey Mouse ears, things seemed to be back on track as the group made their way towards the treasure trove that was Loch Nora. Eleven had taken Mike's hand as the two talked quietly between themselves, while Will and Dustin tried to walk and trade candy at the same time. Max and Lucas, leading the way, chatted about which house to hit up first.

As they approached the swanky neighborhood, though, the mood soured as they saw a pair of students walking their way.

Max noticed the look of dismay on Lucas's face. Confused, she asked "What is it?"

"It's Keith Johnson," Lucas said quietly. Keith Johnson and his friend, Chris Britt, were the high school versions of Troy and James. The two were walking towards the party, dressed like scary clowns.

Mike gripped El's hand a little tighter as the rest of the group slowed down.

"Well, well, well," Keith said, approaching the group. "What do we have here?"

"Just leave us alone, guys, jeez," Max said, folding her arms.

Ignoring her, Keith looked to Mike and El and started chuckling. "Mickey and Minnie Mouse? What are you, two?"

"Shut up," Mike said.

"Mouthbreather," El said under her breath.

"And who're you supposed to be?" Keith asked, looking to Dustin. Mimicking Dustin's lisp, he asked "Indiana Thones?"

"Hey," Chris said, nodding to Will, "Check out Marty McStupid."

Will shrank back to no effect, as Keith pulled the skateboard he was carrying out of his arms. "What's this for?"



"It's my hoverboard," the small boy answered.

"Pssh," Keith said. "It's just a stupid useless skateboard."

"It works," came a small voice. All eyes turned to El.

"What?"

"It works," El said, smiling. "Go ahead, Will, show them."

Will looked confused, but took the board back. Putting it down, he stood on it. He wobbled for a second; nothing happened.

"See," Keith said, "It's just a..."

But then the skateboard slowly began to float; Will struggled to find his balance, but when he did he had a huge smile on his face.

(Nobody but Mike noticed the blood under Eleven's nose as she levitated the skateboard and moved it forward a few feet.)

After a few seconds, the board landed gently on the ground, with Will stumbling off.

"How did you do that?" Keith asked, bewildered. "Let me try!" Pushing past Will, he jumped on. Nothing happened at first, but then it jerked forward, causing Keith to fly off and land in a nearby pile of trash bags, causing everyone around them to laugh.

"That's too bad," Dustin said to Keith as he lay in the trash, embarrassed. "But next time, if you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything," he added as the party continued on.

"That was so *awesome*," Max said when they'd put some distance between them and Keith. "I hope we run into some more jerks from school."

"Yeah, thanks, El," Will said.

"You're welcome."

"That *was* cool, El," Mike said softly as he took her hand in his. "But it was dangerous. What if someone had seen you?"

Eleven shook her head. "No one saw me."

"Yeah, but..." Mike paused, and used the back of his sleeve to wipe away the blood under her nose. "Still, it was..."

"Risky?" she asked, remembering Hopper use the term.

"Yeah. But...thanks, I guess."

She smiled, and kissed his cheek.

Loch Nora ended up being a success, as the group ended up filling their bags a quarter of the way in that neighborhood alone. A little after 8:30, they began their way back to Mike's house.

"Mom, we're home!" Mike called as the group entered the house. A nearly empty bowl of candy sat in a chair by the door, and the party helped themselves to a few.

"How'd it go?" Mrs. Wheeler asked with a smile as she greeted them.

"Pretty good haul," Dustin said, holding up his sagging pillowcase.

"I'm glad for you guys," she responded. Looking at her son's girlfriend, she asked "How was your first Halloween?"

"Amazing," Eleven answered.

"Good."

"We're gonna go in the basement," Mike said, "And watch some movies."

"No, you can have the family room," Karen said, shaking her head. "Holly is all tuckered out, I'm going to take her upstairs."

The group entered the family room, where young Holly Wheeler lay slumped against an arm of the couch in her bee costume. Karen

scooped her up, and after warning Mike to not stay up too late nor to eat too much candy, she headed upstairs.

Collapsing in the family room, the group emptied their bags and began sorting through their candy.

“Here, El,” Lucas said, ignoring the look Mike was giving him. He scooped up a Snickers bar from El’s bag and handed it to her. “Try it.”

“I’ve had one before,” she said. Nevertheless, she peeled back the wrapper and took a bite. She nodded her head, saying “Mmmm.”

“Here comes the *real* test,” Dustin said, as he spied Mike picking up a Milky Way.

“No,” Mike said, shrugging his shoulders. Catching Eleven’s eye, he explained “If you don’t like it, you don’t like it.”

She accepted the chocolate, and peeled back the wrapper. Everyone watched with bated breath as El took a bite; she almost immediately closed her eyes, as a smile came to her face. “*Mmm.*”

“You like it?!” Mike asked, excited.

Eleven nodded as she opened her eyes. “I love it,” she said with a mouth full of caramel.

“Yes!” Mike said, pumping his fist. “I have the best girlfriend ever!”

“It’s just a candy bar,” Lucas said. “Relax.”

But Mike was smiling like he’d just won the lottery as he settled back onto the couch he and El shared.

“I’m telling you,” Dustin said, his mouth full of nougat, “You guys don’t know what you’re missing.”

“And we’re telling you,” Max said as she grabbed a few Jolly Ranchers, “We don’t care.”

Dustin shrugged.

“So what movie are we going to watch?” Will asked.

“How about Evil Dead?” Max suggested.

“No, we have to watch Halloween,” Lucas said. “It’s a tradition.”

“It’s not a tradition,” Mike argued. “We’ve watched it once, like, every two years.”

“There’s a Halloween movie?” Eleven asked. “Is it about trick or treating?”

Will chuckled. “Not exactly.”

“Okay, then, how about Nightmare on Elm Street?” Mike asked.

The group eventually agreed, and after finding the cassette, got comfortable with their candy and settled in front of the TV.

An hour and a half later, when the movie ended, the group lay in various stages in the Wheeler family room.

Dustin, who’d watched from an easy chair, was asleep with his head back, a handful of candy wrappers decorating his stomach.

Will had sat on one end of the couch, and was still awake as the credits began to roll. Lucas and Max, who sat on the other end of said couch, were both out cold; Lucas snoring softly, his head on his girlfriend’s shoulder.

Mike and El sat together in the Lay-Z-Boy, a few discarded Milky Way wrappers and mini Milk Dud boxes by their feet. Eleven was asleep, her Minnie ears tangled in her curls. Mike, like Will, had stayed awake throughout the movie.

“I always jump at the ending,” Will said, grinning at Mike.

“Yeah, me too,” Mike replied. After a moment, he asked, “So was this Halloween better than last year’s?”

*“Much better,”* Will said. “I even got to fly on a hoverboard.”

They both chuckled, and Mike’s bouncing shoulder caused Eleven to open her eyes. “Is it over?” she asked, looking around.

“Yeah, it’s over,” Mike said.

She nodded. “Hopper will be here soon.”

“And so will Jonathan,” Will said, getting up and bagging his candy.

“We’d better get them up,” Mike said, nodding at their slumbering friends.

El shook Dustin’s shoulder, and the curly haired bard awoke with a jump, sending candy wrappers flying. “Did I miss it?” he asked.

“Miss what?”

“The end?”

“Yeah, you missed it,” Will answered.

“Aw, man. I love that part.”

“What happens?” Eleven asked.

“She’s standing by her...” Dustin began.

“Don’t tell her,” Mike said, cutting him off. Looking at El, he asked, “You want to see it? I can rewind it.”

El nodded, and Mike rewound the tape. They all watched the screen as Marge watched the car drive off. When Freddy Krueger yanked her through the door, however, Eleven let out a yelp as she jumped.

“That’s *awesome*,” Dustin said.

“Are you okay?” Mike asked El quietly.

As she nodded, Lucas and Max woke up. “Jeez, stalker, snore much?” Max asked.

Lucas sat up. "I don't snore."

"Yes you do," his friends said.

"I've been telling you for years, Lucas," Dustin said.

"Whatever."

As the group got ready to disband, there was last minute candy swapping and talks of the fun they'd had. Max made Eleven swear to take her "hoverboarding" sometime soon.

Eventually, Jonathan came back with Nancy, then took Will home. Dustin bid the group farewell, and biked to his house. Max walked next door with Lucas, where Billy was going to pick her up. Then it was just Mike and Eleven. The two sat on the couch as they awaited Hopper's arrival.

"So how'd you like your first Halloween?" Mike asked her.

Leaning on his shoulder, she smiled as she said "I liked it. Thank you for taking me."

"Of course I would've taken you, El."

"And thanks for being Mickey." She sat up. "I know you didn't want to."

Mike shook his head. "You know what? It wasn't as bad as I was making it out to be. Even being called Mikey Mouse didn't really make me mad."

"And you looked cute," she said, kissing his nose.

Mike blushed. "Not as cute as you, though."

She smiled, and the two leaned in and shared a quick kiss. As they pulled away, they heard Hopper honk his horn outside.

Eleven leaned her forehead against Mike's. "I don't want to go."

"I know," he said, taking her hand. "But we'll see each other

tomorrow. And I'll call you on the Supercomm tonight."

"Promise?"

He nodded. "Promise."

They walked together outside, and despite Hopper's impatient look, shared one more kiss before El got into the car.

The car ride home was full of El's excited recap of her trick or treating (minus the whole "hoverboard" moment). When they got home, she took off her mouse ears and placed it next to a photo of she and Mike on her dresser.

Despite Hopper telling her *no more candy*, she snuck out of her bedroom and peeked inside her candy bag. As she peeked inside once more, she smiled when she saw Mike had slipped in another Milky Way bar. Making sure Hopper couldn't see from where he was dozing on the couch, she slipped it into her pajama pocket and turned to sneak back to her room.

"Put it back," came Hopper's voice.

She rolled her eyes, and put it back into the bag. "How did you know?"

"I've got eyes in the back of my head, kid," he said. "Now go to sleep. Goodnight."

"Goodnight," she responded as she went back to her room. As she closed her door, she heard her walkie crackling, and a moment later heard a familiar voice say "El? You there?"

She smiled as she went to pick up. It sucked she couldn't have one more piece of candy; but she'd take Mike over Milky Ways anyway.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

I tried so hard to publish this on Halloween, but I couldn't do it. Oh, well. Now I know not to give myself deadlines.

Milky Ways are awesome, by the way.

New stuff (hopefully) coming in a few weeks. Thanks for reading.